

ESSAYS ON THE PUBLIC CHARITIES OF
PHILADELPHIA.

By

Mathew Carey

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ESSAYS

ON

THE PUBLIC CHARITIES OF PHILADELPHIA,

INTENDED TO VINDICATE THE BENEVOLENT SOCIETIES OF THIS CITY FROM THE CHARGE OF ENCOURAGING IDLENESS, AND TO PLACE IN STRONG RELIEF, BEFORE AN ENLIGHTENED PUBLIC, THE SUFFERINGS AND OPPRESSION UNDER WHICH THE GREATER PART OF THE FEMALES LABOUR, WHO DEPEND ON THEIR INDUSTRY FOR A SUPPORT FOR THEMSELVES AND CHILDREN.

BY M. CAREY,

Member of the American Philosophical and Antiquarian Societies; and Author of "The Olive Branch," "Vindiciæ Hibernicæ," &c.

"Street beggars are not proper objects of your bounty. *Garets, cellars, and such like places, exhibit spectacles far more affecting*: there, the wretched inhabitants are found, either exerting the last efforts of nature to support themselves amidst the froens of adversity, or languishing under the painful influence of some disease—and destitute of every means; and, to complete their distress, often strangers in the place, and on that account cut off from the last refuge of the afflicted—the hope of being relieved; and unhappily many of them without the comforts of that religion, which, penetrating under the gloom of human wretchedness, opens a bright prospect into another and a better world!"—*Fellus.*

"Among the chief objects of the benevolent, is the relief of the fatherless and the widow—of her who has lost her dearest friend, and of those who are deprived of their best earthly guardian. If suffering ever has claims on our sympathy, it is when presented under such circumstances. There are those who, from principle, as they say, refuse assistance to the man who can obtain the means of supplying all his wants by his daily labour. But can they withhold relief from her who comes in her desolation and weakness—*woman, who, by the law of her being, is excluded from paths in which coarser, man may make a livelihood*; and, by the custom of society, is OBLIGED TO ACCEPT LESS THAN HALF OF WHAT THE MOST STUPID OF THE OTHER SEX CAN EARN, as a compensation for her unremitting toil.—Can any turn, with a close hand and a closer heart, from orphanans in their childhood and misery—FRIENDLESS, COLD, STARVING CHILDREN? No. He is not sound in mind who can do this. His reason is disordered. He is more to be pitied than the wretched sufferers. The widow! Shall I attempt to depict her grief? Her sufferings are too holy to be often made the objects of public gaze. Yet sometimes we may lift the veil from such misery, in the hope of awakening compassion. He who was her friend, her adviser, her solace, her reliance, is taken from her; he with whom she shared her hopes and fears, her anxieties and joys, the intimate and inmate of her bosom, in whose life her own seemed to be involved, has been removed; his body is in the dark grave; his soul in the unseen, unknown world. * * * FATHERLESS, HELPLESS CHILDREN ARE DEPENDENT ON HER. They must be fed, and she has not a morsel to put in their hungry mouths, nor a garment in which to wrap their shivering limbs.

"I mock you not with a tale of imaginary distress. I tell you of suffering which I have known to exist in this city. It is not fiction which describes a mother wasted to the bone by watching and fatigue, over the sick bed of her husband; and left after his death, heart-broken and pennyless, with little children crying to her for bread, she knows not how to get, but from charity or by theft."—GANNET.

FOURTH EDITION, GRATUITOUS.

PHILADELPHIA:

PRINTED BY J. CLARKE, NO. 7, FRANKLIN PLACE.

1829.

Ap. Soc. Sci.
HV99
P54C27
1829
cop. 1

REPRODUCED FROM
THE ORIGINAL

PREFACE.

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This pamphlet is now presented to the public for a fourth time, and in an improved state.* The opinions of some of the most estimable members of society, of the highest order of intellect, and of the purest hearts, induce me to believe, that in pleading the cause of a valuable and industrious class of females—in placing their wrongs and sufferings before a humane and enlightened community, if I have not succeeded to the extent of my wishes, I have not been wholly unsuccessful; that I have fully satisfied those who have hearts to feel for human misery, and who have duly weighed the subject, of the utter fallacy of the heartless, withering slang, that the wretchedness and sufferings of the poor are the result of their improvidence, worthlessness and dissipation; that the shamefully reduced rate of female wages in general, is the parent of a large portion of that wretchedness and those sufferings; and that it places those females who depend on their needles, and live in their own apartments, in a situation almost too trying for human nature, with five choices, *to beg—to depend on the overseers of the poor, a species of begging—to steal—to starve—or to sell themselves to pollution—to misery and disease here, and perhaps to misery hereafter.* Scepticism itself can scarcely entertain a shadow of doubt on the subject, when it is considered that neither skill, talent, nor industry, can enable those poor creatures to earn more than a dollar, a dollar and a quarter, or perhaps one out of ten, a dollar and a half per week; that a considerable portion of their time they are unemployed; that they generally pay half a dollar per week for their lodgings; that they purchase wood by the small bundle, at the rate, probably, of fifteen or twenty dollars a cord, and all other articles they consume at most exorbitant prices. These are harrowing truths which cannot be too often repeated, until a remedy, or at least some palliation, is applied.

I have, moreover, I hope, established the fallacy of the idea that benevolent and assistance societies foster idleness and improvidence, by inducing a reliance on their aid, instead of industry and application. This is, I repeat, in the most earnest manner, a most pernicious error, and productive of masses of misery to the poor, by searing the hearts of the opulent. From the view I have so often given of the wages of various kinds of female labour, it is obvious that the aid of those societies, judiciously extended, cannot fail to be frequently imperiously necessary, and eminently beneficial.

It has been asserted that the expenditure, in this city, for the support of the poor, as well by individuals and charitable societies, as by the guardians, is 600,000 dollars a year. This has excited a spirit of hostility against those societies, among many of our citizens, and a murmuring at what they regard as an enormous abuse. Few greater errors have ever had currency. The poor tax, under its worst management, and nothing could well be worse, prior to the new arrangement, has generally averaged about \$125,000 per annum, no small portion of which arose from the wretchedness created by the miserable wages paid for female labour. The total receipts of the thirty-

* The three former editions of this pamphlet were printed and distributed gratuitously by the author. This edition of 1000 copies, is published partly at his expense, but chiefly at that of some ladies and gentlemen, who have honoured the little work with their approbation, and are desirous of promoting the objects to which it is devoted.

three societies, enumerated, page 21, were, last year, only \$59,000, of which at least 20,000 dollars consisted of large bequests and donations, which were invested as capital stock, and of course were unexpended. Thus the actual expenditure was reduced to less than 40,000 dollars, for all those societies, for the support of infant schools, and education generally, for the support of orphan houses, the widows' asylum, the house of refuge, the asylum for the deaf and dumb, and for the Magdalens, for the abolition of slavery, for colonization, and for purchasing food for the hungry, drink for the thirsty, and clothes for the naked, exclusive of the government and county contributions to the house of Refuge, and the institution for the Deaf and Dumb. And I am persuaded that the disbursements of all the other societies, of every description, benevolent, moral, and religious, would not amount to half as much more.

To prove the advantages resulting from benevolent societies, and thus to induce the wealthy, who have hearts to feel for human misery, to afford them liberal aid, and enable them to widely extend the sphere of their humane operations, I will state the effects of the benignant interference of some of the ladies of one of those societies.

The family of M'Giffie, whose case is stated, page 28, were actually suffering for want of the common necessaries of life, when their case became known to those excellent women. The father was emaciated—the mother lying in a state of insensibility—one child was dead—and the other dying! At this crisis, the humane interference took place of the ladies in question, by whom necessaries were supplied in abundance—a bed was given to replace the straw, on which the woman lay—a stove was hired for their use, fuel provided, &c. In consequence of the administration of proper nutriment, the physical powers of the parents were renovated; and the sympathy and compassion expressed for their sufferings raised their spirits, and enabled them to look forward to the future with hope and confidence. When the man recovered, money was raised to pay for a loom. He diligently sought for, and fortunately found employment. I visited their room lately, and found them cheerful, happy, industrious, and likely to continue useful members of society. But for the succour so opportunely afforded, they would have languished—perhaps died. What balm and consolation must their god-like interference, and its delightful result afford to those ladies! Whenever it recurs to recollection, but more particularly at the hour of death, when this world with all its fugitive enjoyments will fade from before their eyes, what a contrast to the dying reflections of the victim of sordid avarice, who hoards up his treasures to the last hour of his existence; or to those of the voluptuary, who spends his fortune in sensual gratifications! How freely would they then part with boundless wealth to purchase such delightful reminiscences!

It may be said, it is frequently said, that among the poor there are depraved and worthless characters, whose intemperance and vices have been the causes of their sufferings, and who therefore are unworthy of sympathy or relief. The first part of the position is true, but the inference is unwarranted, and unworthy of human nature. At all events, the accusation is unjust, as regards the mass of the poor; but suppose it were correct, does it follow, that it is justifiable to

turn a deaf ear or to harden the heart to the sufferings of poor fellow mortals, in want of food to satisfy the cravings of hunger, or of clothing to screen their shivering limbs from the inclemency of the weather, because their distress may have resulted from imprudence, or even from vice? I believe not. I believe that humanity and religion both prescribe a totally different course. We are all offenders, in a greater or less degree, and have no right to hope for mercy if we extend it not to others.—

“That mercy I to others shew,
“That mercy show to me,”—

Is a sound prayer, and implies a just condition. The good Samaritan, who is correctly held up to us as a model for imitation, did not, when he found the poor traveller wounded, and perhaps dying, stop to inquire how he came by his wounds; whether they were received in a drunken frolic, in an assault and battery, or in an attempt to rob or murder. He did not, like the priest and the Levite, “pass by on the other side.” No. Far otherwise did he behave, and far otherwise should we all behave. He saw a fellow-being suffering. That was enough for him. He asked himself, “Am I not a man and a brother?” And the affirmative answer determined his conduct. He cheered him with sympathy and consolation, poured balm into his wounds, and left money on his departure to procure proper attendance, and to restore him to his family and to society, whatever might have led to his calamitous situation.

Alas! alas!

“Why all the souls that were, were forfeit once,
“And he that might the vantage best have took,
“Found out the remedy. How would you be,
“If HE, which is the top of judgment, should
“But judge you as you are? O think of that,
“And mercy then will breathe upon your lips,
“Like man new made.”—*Shakspeare.*

Since I published the third edition of this pamphlet, I have myself visited some of the abodes of wretchedness, in order to view with my own eyes, and to be able to state with precision, the situation of some of the hapless beings whose cause I am feebly, but to the best of my ability, pleading at the bar of a flourishing and benevolent community.

I visited a room in Shippen-street, near where the M'Giffies live, which contained no furniture, but a miserable bed, covered with a pair of ragged blankets. Three small sticks lay on the hearth. The day was intensely cold. The occupant, a woman, far too slenderly clad, had two children, one about five years old, the other about fifteen months. Both were inadequately dressed for the season, and were *destitute of shoes and stockings. The younger child had its hands and feet severely frost-bitten, and the inside of the fingers so much cracked with the frost, that a small blade of straw might lie in the fissures!*—What a hideous case in such a city as Philadelphia!

In this pursuit I met with various scenes of the most distressing kind, and some of them scarcely credible. The following is so very extraordinary, that I have been reluctant to narrate it. In a small frame house, painted blue, on the east side of Eleventh street, the corner of an alley below Pine street, there is a room fifteen feet long, and eleven feet wide, in which there are three beds close together. When I visited it, there were two women at work, one spooling and

the other spinning. If they had constant employment, they could earn each only 20 or 25 cents a day—but work came in very irregularly. Notwithstanding their distressed situation, they were cheerful and resigned. The husband of the one, though sickly, could work a little, if he could procure employment. But he and the other man, who was as strong as a Hercules, had been out of employment for weeks. The two families had four children. I have been particular in describing the locality of these families, to afford an opportunity to those gentlemen who are in the habit of displaying their eloquence in declaiming against, and railing at, benevolent societies, and at the idleness and worthlessness of the poor, a fair opportunity of testing as well the justice as the humanity of their never-ending tirades, and of shewing them the necessity of choosing some other topic for their oratory.

In another room, in a different house, I found a man, his wife, and four children. The man had been long ill, and was in the last stage of a consumption. One of the children was an infant. The woman took in washing and rough drying, at twenty-five cents per dozen—and partly from the irregularity and uncertainty of employment, and partly from attention to her children, did not earn more than 75 cents or a dollar per week.

In another room I found a man and his wife, who were unable to pay rent, and were allowed to lodge with a relation, nearly as poor as themselves. The man had broke a blood vessel many months since, and was unable to work at his trade. His wife earned a paltry pittance by shoe binding. They had one child—and were obliged to limit themselves to two meals a day.

I found the case of a woman, who, in the month of February, had lain in, and had been a week without the comfort of a fire.

A very respectable foreigner whom tyranny forced to fly from his country, is, with his wife, lodged in a miserable hovel, in a blind alley, and thankfully partook of the soup furnished by the Southwark society. They are absolutely penniless.

I forbear to detail any more horrors, and deeply regret to state that there are numerous cases of as intense suffering in Southwark, as can be found in any other part of the world. This is an unpalatable truth—but it must be told, to arouse our wealthy citizens from the error in which many of them are, on this very important subject. Let those who doubt, call on me, and I will exhibit the scenes, particularly the one in Eleventh street.

Here, I take the liberty to introduce an extract from a letter I received from the Rev. Mr. Ely, which contains a startling, but indubitable truth.

“From intimate acquaintance with many of the industrious poor, for eighteen years past, both in New York and in this city, I am constrained to say, that your remarks concerning the inadequate payment which females receive for their labour, are just, and ought deeply to affect every benevolent person, who has any wish to do justly, and see honest industry suitably rewarded. *A common slave in the states of Virginia, Tennessee, and Kentucky, is much better compensated for his labour, by his necessary food, clothing, lodging, and medicines, than many respectable mothers and daughters in this city, who apply themselves diligently to their work, two hours for every one occupied by the negro in his master's service.* Your remarks will apply to the folding and stitching of books, to the sewing of carpet rags, to the binding of shoes, * * * no less than to the work done for the army and navy.”

I have endeavoured to prove in various parts of this pamphlet, that the industry, morals, and virtues of the poor, are underrated. A stri-

king instance of their industry is afforded by the fact, that on Tuesday last, there were eleven hundred applicants seeking for employment at the apartment of the Provident Society, in making shirts at 12 1-2 cents each, although it was known none could have more than four, and few more than two. Many of them had travelled six, eight, and ten squares for this most miserable employment. This bears the most overwhelming testimony to their intense distress, and their untiring industry.

Of the prevailing poverty and distress, and the necessity of affording occasional aid beyond what is had from the guardians or overseers of the poor, there are various unerring indications to be met with, which cannot fail to strike the most careless and inconsiderate observer. I have now before me an indication of this description, which must excite the most harrowing reflections, when the mass of wretchedness to which it owes its existence is considered. In New-York, by a wise regulation of the police, the pawnbrokers are bound to furnish weekly to a particular officer, the number and description of the pledges they receive. The return of the week ending the 29th of last December, contains the following enumeration :—

Articles of women's dress,	-	-	945
Articles of men's dress,	-	-	825
Clocks, time pieces, and watches,	-	-	240
Gold watches,	-	-	45
Table and tea spoons, silver,	-	-	235
Ear and finger rings, chains and brooches,	-	-	224
Bibles,	-	-	9
Other articles, not enumerated above,	-	-	966
Total,	-	-	3489

The writer who published this statement, supposes this a fair average of the year; and assumes that the average sum lent on each article, is about three dollars, which would make a total of 180,000 pledges, and of loans to the amount of \$540,000, on which he calculates a profit of 25 per cent, or \$135,000, wrung from the sweat of the brows of the indigent! As if this were not enough, it may be fairly assumed, that the articles in general cost at least 50 per cent. more than is advanced on them. This will amount to the enormous sum of \$800,000 worth of property alienated in the course of a year!!! as few of the unfortunate people who deposite those pledges are able to redeem them.

Should it be said that this statement refers to New-York, I reply that there cannot be a doubt, that if a similar regulation prevailed here, a similar, or a nearly similar result would appear.

Since the above was written, I have received a statement from New York, by which it appears, that during the last year, there were 148,890 articles pawned by 71,576 persons—and, in addition, 6012 sales of second hand articles, by persons licensed to carry on that traffic! Who can, without the deepest sympathy, contemplate the distress, the suffering, the anguish felt by those 71,000 persons before they resolved on such sacrifices?

There is one portion of the evils resulting from the present state of things, as regards the rate of wages, paid for most species of female labour, to which no attention is paid, but which is of a most serious character. Those women who have children, and are unable to procure food for them, frequently send them abroad to beg. They are

generally repulsed. Hunger pinches them. They have no distinct notions of right or wrong. Their employment degrades and debases them. Temptation arises. An opportunity offers to filch and steal. They avail themselves of it, and it is not improbable that the career of wickedness, which leads so many to the penitentiary, may have commenced in this way, by petty thefts, produced by the goadings of hunger.

We have gradually and imperceptibly slid into the practice of England, so far as regards a portion of the labouring poor. The chief difference is, that in that country, it is reduced to system, whereas here it is perfectly arbitrary. When a manufacturer or farmer there is unable or unwilling to pay his work-people as much as is necessary to support human nature, the overseer of the poor makes up the difference, and the working people regard this as a sort of indefeasible right. Here, a spooler, or a seamstress, who works on muslin shirts, or pantaloons, cannot, by any possibility, earn enough to support herself; and if she does not steal or prostitute herself to make up the balance, it is made up by levying contributions on individual charity, or by benevolent societies. This is a state of things that makes an imperative appeal, I will not say to humanity or sympathy, but to honour, honesty, and justice. Every individual industriously employed, in a useful occupation, has an indisputable claim to healthful and comfortable support. Those who employ him or her, ought, in honour and justice, to yield that support; and when the remuneration is reduced below that standard, and advantage is taken of their distress, or of the competition arising from an excess of numbers, it is flagrant injustice. I venture to assert, that the situation of a spooler, who receives the yarn wet, and is paid but 15 or 20 cents per hundred skeins, is as deplorable as that of the most oppressed of the work-people in any part of Europe.

For the observations I have made on the Provident Society, page 18, I have been censured by some estimable managers of that society, for whom I entertain great respect. They consider them as unjust, and as likely to lower the character of the institution, to diminish its usefulness, and of course to injure the class whose cause I advocate. I have since thought deeply on the subject, and my mind remains unaltered. I believe that a society, with the liberal patronage under which it commenced its operations, ought to have paid a rate of wages, which would afford a decent subsistence, come what might of its income; and I cannot allow myself to believe, that there would have been any deficiency of funds for such a laudable purpose, on a proper appeal made by the respectable men who are at the head of this institution. Is it possible that such an appeal, in a cause that speaks so feelingly and powerfully to the human heart, could fail of success in a city where the sum of \$9500 has been raised for the poor in about a week? Certainly not. When the Female Hospitable Society, which, great as are its merits, never had such patronage engaged in its support, has been able to maintain itself for twenty years, and to pay never less than 183-4 cents for making coarse muslin shirts, it cannot, for a moment, be admitted that the Provident Society was obliged to limit the price to 12 1-2 cents. In a plain common sense view of the subject, it would appear that the only questions, of which it is susceptible, are, ought not the labour of every individual in Society, to procure food, and raiment, and lodging? If this be answered,

as it must be, in the affirmative, the next question is, can a woman, with a helpless child or two, or even without them, procure those necessary articles for a dollar, or a dollar and a quarter per week? By the result of these questions I stand or fall; and for that result I throw myself, unhesitatingly, on the decision of an enlightened and humane public.

On another point I have met with equal censure, I mean the proposition to modify the new system of poor-laws, so as to admit of outdoor relief in extraordinary cases of persons reduced from ease and opulence to poverty. The law, as passed at the last session of our legislature, most explicitly declares, that from the completion of the new building, no outdoor relief shall be afforded but "*temporarily*;" and I repeat what I have already asserted, that there are probably from two to three hundred persons in this city, of the above description, who ought never to be placed with the alternative of either going to the alms-house, or being exposed to starvation. By proper management, let it be observed, an outdoor pensioner can be supported as cheaply as an inmate of an alms-house. And here I must beg leave to state a harrowing case, of late occurrence. A man who had a respectable establishment, for many years, and who always maintained a fair character, was gradually reduced, for several years past, to abject penury, without friend or relation, and was at last houseless and pennyless. In this lamentable situation, he went voluntarily into the alms-house, where he was so horrified at the abominations and corruptions of the motley herd, by whom he was surrounded, that he refused sustenance, and actually starved himself to death. I forbear mentioning his name; but it may be had on application at the office of the Democratic Press.

I was well aware, when I commenced this pamphlet, that I should not escape censure. No man ever did escape, who endeavoured to remove evils, however palpable, or however salutary the proposed reforms might be. How could I hope for an exemption? I am therefore not disappointed.

I am not without a hope, that the investigations to which this publication has led, and from which it is not unreasonable to hope for salutary results, will be undertaken elsewhere, and produce an important alleviation of the misery and wretchedness to which a useful, and I say emphatically, a respectable class of society, is every where exposed, whereby they are ground to the earth, without the most distant hope at present of ever emerging, unless a total alteration takes place. That the state of things which I have portrayed should have existed for years in an enlightened, moral, and religious community, can only be accounted for by a radical and pernicious prejudice on the subject with some, and a total ignorance on the part of others, not merely of the frightful extent, but of the existence of the evil. I cannot allow myself to believe, now that it is placed before the public, in the glare of day, in all its frightful deformity, that it will remain much longer, without serious efforts of influential individuals, if not wholly to remove, at least to mitigate or palliate the evil—to lessen the enormity of the suffering.

There is in London a "Society for bettering the condition of the Poor," which has been eminently beneficial to that too-much neglected class. The members visit the poor in their turns; administer advice and consolation, provide shops wherein they can purchase the ne-

cessaries of life at first cost ; and in a variety of ways relieve their distresses ; add to their comforts and happiness ; and elevate them in their own estimation, from the abasement to which poverty is too apt to degrade its subjects. I annex a short extract from the prefatory address to their publications, written by the benevolent Thomas Bernard, esq. who, I believe, was the founder of the society :—

“ The interests of the poorer classes of society are so interwoven with those of every part of the community, that there is no subject more deserving of general attention, nor any knowledge more entitled to the exalted name of science, than that in which their well-being is concerned ; than that, the tendency of which is to carry domestic comfort into the recesses of every habitation, and to add to the virtue and morality of a nation, by increasing its happiness. The noblest and most elevated employments of the human mind lose their importance, when placed in competition with researches on
 “ WHICH THE WELFARE AND GOOD CONDUCT OF MILLIONS MAY DEPEND,
 “ AND THE RESULT WHEREOF MAY ADD AS MUCH TO NATIONAL PROSPERITY,
 “ AS TO INDIVIDUAL HAPPINESS.”

Such a society might effect incalculable good in this city, at a very moderate expense,* and would, perhaps, produce as much solid benefit as any other society whatsoever, as it would extend its surveillance and fostering cares to the great mass of the poor ; whereas, the operations of other beneficent societies are, from the scantiness of their means, confined within very narrow limits. Among the objects of such a society, would be to teach the poor the most economical means of dressing their food ; to furnish them with lime and brushes to white-wash their rooms ; to induce them to send their children to school ; to prevail on such of them as had the means, to deposite their earnings in the saving fund ; and to provide supplies of the necessaries of life to be sold to the poor at wholesale rates, with merely such an advance as would keep the funds of the society unimpaired.

In the city and liberties of Philadelphia, there are about 130,000 inhabitants, and, according to the usual proportion, about 22,000 houses. It may be assumed that two-fifths of those houses are occupied by persons in tolerably easy circumstances, who would generally be disposed to contribute two or three dollars per ann. towards purposes of obvious utility or benevolence, such as the promotion of education, the support of the dispensaries, of the house of refuge, of the establishments for widows and orphans, of the Magdalen asylum, of the asylum for the deaf and dumb, or for the relief of the hungry and naked. To doubt this would be a reflection on the character of the city. If this assumption were realized, it would form an annual fund, of above \$17,000 for great objects to which no man, possessed of a spark of grace or goodness, can be indifferent ; a fund which would produce immense benefits, and mitigate masses of human misery. For all these purposes, the last year's annual subscriptions for the thirty-three societies enumerated page 21, embracing nearly all of importance except those for religious purposes, were only about \$6000 from our entire population of 130,000 persons ; and, as I have stated, this sum was contributed by less than 2000 persons, who, of course, bore burdens which ought in justice and equity, to have been borne by the whole community.

* Let me respectfully suggest to the religious part of the community, that a title of the sums raised for foreign missions, would do infinite good, (I make no comparison, which I leave to the reader,) if employed for the purposes of bettering the condition and elevating the character of the poor at home.

The disproportion in the contributions, does not arise by any means from the parsimony or disinclination to contribute, of the mass of our citizens. They are not generally called on; or, if called on, sometimes under revolting circumstances. There are in society, I feel satisfied, hundreds of generous souls, who, when they read a fervid appeal from the managers of the asylums for the widows and orphans, or the institution for the deaf and dumb, or the house of refuge, &c. are ready and willing to patronize them; and if the opportunity offered just then, would cheerfully subscribe. They intend to subscribe, but they scarcely know where to apply; or they postpone it; or, in a short time, they wholly forget the subject. These are the causes why so few of our citizens contribute to those benevolent and beneficent institutions, which go far to redeem the human character from the foul stain of withering selfishness. This state of things calls for a remedy whereby burdens, the benefits of which are enjoyed by all, should be more equally distributed. I venture to propose a remedy, which, I flatter myself, would be very effectual, and for which I most earnestly implore the public favour.

Let a person of genteel and courteous manners be employed, and a book provided with as many divisions as there are societies, for which patronage is sought. Let him apply at every house, which, from its appearance, may be presumed to be occupied by a person likely to subscribe. Let it be distinctly understood, that, in order to equalize the honour of contribution, and leave the matter open as wide as possible, it is not expected that any individual should subscribe to a greater amount than two or three dollars, (except to the orphan house and the widows' asylum, of which the subscription is five dollars,) for which he will of course select the institution which he most highly approves. Let the collector deposit the total amount he receives daily, in some bank, to the credit of trustees, to be appointed for the purpose, to be divided afterwards according to the respective subscriptions. I may, perhaps, be too sanguine, but I flatter myself that this plan, cordially and zealously patronized by thirty or forty respectable individuals, entitled to and enjoying public confidence, could not fail of complete success.

P. S. Shall I be pardoned for stating, that this pamphlet has cost me more time, labour and expense than articles four times the size—but that I feel myself amply compensated by the elevated views with which it has furnished me of the character of the ladies of Philadelphia, in the noble display of those humane and benevolent feelings that characterise the sex.

March 13, 1829.

M. C.

POSTSCRIPT.

An address on the subject of the wages paid to the seamstresses employed on the government work, of which the following is a copy, was forwarded on the 13th of Jan. to the Secretary of War :—

“The subscribers are convinced that an expert seamstress, unencumbered with a family of children, and working industriously from morning till night, cannot make more than two shirts per day* (12 1-2 cents each) equal to a dollar and a half a week; that many of those employed at this work, are widows with small families, who cannot do more on an average than 7, 8, or 9 per week, according to the attention that their children may require; that they are frequently out of employment; and hence it is probable, that even those who have no families, cannot average more than the above number of shirts, 7, 8, or 9 per week.”

This address was signed by ninety-one ladies, among whom were Mrs. Chew, Mrs. Rush, Mrs. Sergeant, Mrs. Dr. Hare, Mrs. Sarah Barry, Mrs. Burd, Mrs. Markoe, Mrs. Izard, Mrs. Ball, Mrs. Miller, Mrs. G. Harrison, Mrs. Silver, Mrs. M'Clure, &c. &c.

To the preceding address the following representation was appended:

The Honorable the Secretary of War.

SIR,

“We respectfully submit the annexed statement to your most serious consideration. But although we are perfectly satisfied that the wages paid by the government, for making muslin shirts, and pantaloons of drilling (12 1-2 cents each) are utterly inadequate to enable the industrious females employed on them (particularly such as have families) to pay rent and to procure a sufficient supply of clothing and the other necessaries of life; we do not presume to suggest what enhancement of prices ought to take place. We have full reliance on your humanity and justice, to take such order in the case, as will relieve this interesting portion of our population from the extreme distress produced by this low rate of wages, which too frequently reduces them to the degradation of pauperism, from which it is difficult to rise; a state of things, which, we are convinced, could never have existed under a liberal and flourishing government, had the officers, within whose province it took place, been aware of the calamitous result. We are, respectfully, Yours, &c.”

This paper was signed by one hundred and thirty-one respectable citizens, among whom were the Rt. Rev. Bishop White, Rev. W. Kemper, Robert Ralston, Alex. Henry, William Jones, Paul Beck, William Meredith, John Markoe, Benjamin Chew, Joseph Tagert, Nicholas Biddle, Thos. Latimer, Chas. M'Calaster, Esq's., &c. &c.

The following reply was received from the Secretary of War :

“GENTLEMEN, “DEPARTMENT OF WAR, February 2, 1829.
“Your letter of the 13th ult. representing that the compensation paid by the agents of the government to the indigent but meritorious females who are employed in making up the clothing of the army, is too small, and requesting that the prices be advanced, has been received and duly considered. “The subject, however, is found to be one of so much delicacy, and is so intimately connected with the manufacturing interests, and the general prices

* The writer of this paper is satisfied that he overrated the maximum quantity which the most expert woman can perform. From particular enquiry on the subject, the concurring opinions of a number of ladies, all of them qualified to decide the question, are, that no woman, however expert she may be, can make two shirts a day, unless she works from five or six o'clock in the morning, till eleven at night; that the majority of them, working from sunrise to nine or ten o'clock, cannot do more than 7 or 8 in a week; and that a woman must be expert, and work steadily within these latter hours, to make nine.

“ of this kind of labour in the city of Philadelphia, that the Department has not felt itself at liberty to interfere farther than to address a letter to the Commissary General of purchases, a copy of which I have the honour to enclose.

“ I have the honour to be, your obedient servant,

“ P. B. PORTER.

“ Messrs. Mathew Carey and others, Philadelphia.”



“ SIR, DEPARTMENT OF WAR, February 2, 1829.

“ Communications, of which the enclosed are copies, signed by some fifty or sixty persons,* who, as far as their names are known to this Department, appear to be amongst the most respectable citizens of Philadelphia, have been received, complaining that the prices paid by you to the needy but industrious females whom you employ in making up clothes for the army, are too low—out of proportion to the compensation allowed to other branches of industry, and inadequate to their support.

“ While the government highly commends the general spirit of economy and zealous regard to the public interest, displayed in your contracts, it cannot wish to *impose terms that shall operate oppressively on any class of its citizens, and more especially on widows and other meritorious females employed in its service.*

“ The difficulty, however, of correctly appreciating, at this place, the merits of the several suggestions contained in the communications of those gentlemen, and a want of sufficient knowledge of the effects which would be produced by acceding to their requests, not only on the particular interests of the government, but on the prices of this species of labour generally throughout the large manufacturing city of Philadelphia, render it a subject of too much delicacy for the Department to interfere; and the whole must therefore be left, where it has been properly placed, in your sound discretion.

“ I have the honour, &c.

(Signed) “ P. B. PORTER.

“ C. IRVINE, Esq. Commissary General of Purchases.”

N. B. No change has since taken place.

* There were two lists of names forwarded to the Secretary at War—containing, as above stated, the names of 131 gentlemen and 91 ladies. The clerk in the war office, must have overlooked one of them.

In order to enable those liberal-minded citizens who are disposed to patronize any of the benevolent institutions of the city, to make such choice as their reason may approve, and to save trouble in enquiring for the residence of Treasurers, I annex a list of Societies, together with the names and places of residence of those officers, and the amount of annual subscriptions.

<i>Charities.</i>		<i>Treasurers.</i>	<i>Residence.</i>	<i>Ann.</i>	<i>Sub's.</i>
1	Philadelphia Dispensary, - - -	1 Joseph M. Paul,	316 Arch Street.	\$5	
2	Southern Dispensary, - - -	2 Robert M'Mullen,	Corner Almond & Swanson.	3	
3	Northern Dispensary, - - -	3 John C. Browne,	Corner of Duke & Front.	3	
4	Indigent widows' and single women's society, - - -	4 Mrs. Mary Hodge,	181 Walnut Street,	5	
5	Society for alleviating the miseries of public prisons, - - -	5 Joseph M. Paul,	316 Arch Street.	1	
6	Female Hospitable Society for relieving and employing the poor, - - -	6 Mrs. Vannelt,	Corner Spruce & Fourth.	2	
7	Female Association for relief of reduced women and children, - - -	7 Miss Hutchins,	31 Sansom Street.	3	
8	Female Benevolent Episcopal Society, - - -	8 Miss Ann F. Wheeler,	232 Race Street.	1	
9	Female Society for relief and employment of the poor, - - -	9 Miss Ann F. Wheeler,	99 Vine Street.	2	
10	Female Association for relief of sick and infirm poor, - - -	10 Mrs. Knight,	14 New Market street,	1	
11	Association for care of coloured orphans, - - -	11 Miss Cath. W. Morris,	56 N. Fourth Street.	2	
12	Provident Society for employing the poor, - - -	12 Richard Price,	133 Market Street.	2	
13	Orphan Society, - - -	13 Mrs. Henry Williams,	98 1-2 South Fourth.	5	
14	Dorcas Society of the district of Southwark, - - -	14 Mrs. M'Chare,	204 Pine Street,	0	50
15	Southern Dorcas Society, - - -	15 Mrs. W. Thompson,	Second, below South Street,	0	50
16	Abolition Society, - - -	16 Henry Troth,	222 Market Street.	1	
17	City Infant School Society, - - -	17 Miss Sarah Yarnall,	357 Market Street.	2	
18	Southwark Infant School Society, - - -	18 Mrs. Mary A. Ely,	144 S. Second Street.	1	
19	Infant School Society of Northern Liberties and Kensington, - - -	19 Miss Catharine Singer,	413 Market Street.	1	
20	Apprentices' Library, - - -	20 S. Sellers,	231 Market Street.	2	
21	Society for the establishment of Charity Schools, - - -	21 Richard Price,	133 Market Street.	2	
22	Public School Society, - - -	22 W. B. Davidson,	Walnut St. above Sixth.	2	
23	Society for House of Refuge, - - -	23 John S. Henry,	192 Market Street.	2	
24	Magdalen Society, - - -	24 James Cresson,	227 Market Street.	1	
25	Society for discouraging the use of Ardent Spirits, - - -	25 Joseph L. Inglis,	104 South Third Street.	2	
26	Institution for Deaf and Dumb, - - -	26 John Bacon,	119 Race Street.	2	
27	Pennsylvania Colonization Society, - - -	27 Gerard Ralston,	103 S. Front Street.	2	
28	Infant's Clothing Association, - - -	28 Miss Mary Jones,	263 Arch Street.	1	
29	Phil. Association of Friends for the instruction of poor children, - - -	29 Bartholomew Wistar,	255 Arch Street.	0	
30	St. Joseph's, or Roman Catholic Orphan Society, - - -	30 Lewis Ryan,	128 Spruce Street.	3	
31	Society for free instruction of female children, - - -	31 Miss Mary Clark,	38 N. Fifth Street.	2	
				Total,	\$62 00

ESSAYS ON THE
PUBLIC CHARITIES OF PHILADELPHIA.

“Whosoever hath this world’s goods, and seeth his brother have need, *and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him*, HOW DWELLETH THE LOVE OF GOD IN HIM?”—1 John, iii. 15.

“How shalt thou hope for mercy, rend’ring none?”

“It is not so expressed. But what of that?”

“’Twere good you do so much for charity.”—*Shakspeare*.

No. I.

I wish to call the attention of the public to the state of some of our institutions, which owe their origin to benevolent motives. Of these there are three species,—Beneficial—Religious—and those intended wholly for charitable purposes, apart from all considerations of religion.

The first, merely private, confine their aid and comfort wholly to the individual members. With them the public at large have no right to interfere. For the second, the spirit of the times makes ample provision; I shall therefore for the present pass them over—and confine the discussion to some of the third description. These are of three sorts—those for the promotion of education—those intended for reformation—and those intended to relieve physical wants.

These societies are very numerous, and have reflected great credit on the city, and tended to confirm its claim to the honourable designation bestowed on it by its illustrious founder. There is reason to believe, however, that no small degree of error prevails on this subject, as regards the extent of the support they receive, and their resources—an error which has a pernicious operation, and ought to be corrected.

It is assumed by many persons that those institutions are very burdensome to our citizens—that the stated contributions for their support are enormously and unnecessarily great—that they encourage idleness and dissipation, and a reliance on charity instead of industry, ---and hence we every day hear loud complaints on the subject, and in consequence many benevolent, worthy, and wealthy citizens are discouraged from affording that patronage which they would otherwise cheerfully give, and which these institutions may fairly claim. Thus the current of public charity is arrested in its course, to the manifest injury of the suffering poor, for whose relief they were instituted.

The July number of the Quarterly Review, just received, contains a view of this subject, as regards Great Britain, so cogent and applicable to the opinions of some of our well meaning, but mistaken citizens, who appear not to have duly weighed it in all its aspects and bearings, that I am induced to submit an extract to the serious consideration of the reader.

“Posterity will scarcely credit the extent of which the popular feeling of this country [Gt. Britain] has been worked upon, and warped by the ravings of some of our *modern economists*. They, truly, have done all that in them lay, TO EXTINGUISH IN THE BOSOMS OF THE MORE OPULENT CLASSES EVERY SPARK OF GENEROUS AND BENEVOLENT COMPASSION TOWARDS THE DESTITUTE AND

NEEDY PAUPER. In their eyes pauperism is a crime for which nothing short of absolute starvation can form an adequate punishment."

The complaints to which I have alluded, cannot apply to donations or bequests, which, being entirely spontaneous, give rise to no murmuring or complaints. They refer wholly to the annual subscriptions, to which, therefore, my observations shall be chiefly confined; and I hope to make it appear that no general clamour or complaint, was ever much more unfounded. Let me observe, *en passant*, that those who are the largest contributors, make the fewest complaints. Indeed, I believe I might say, they never complain.

Before I proceed to the details to which the subject necessarily leads, I beg leave to notice a collateral error, producing similar consequences.

Many citizens entertain an idea that in the present state of society in this city, every person able and willing to work, may procure employment; that all those who are thus employed, may earn a decent and comfortable support; and that if not the whole, at least the chief part of the distresses of the poor, arises from idleness, dissipation, and worthlessness. Alas, nothing can be much farther from the truth, and nothing can have a greater tendency to harden the hearts of those who have the means to afford relief to the distressed, rendering them indifferent to the sufferings of their fellow mortals. There cannot be a doubt that it has produced this indifference to a great extent, and paralyzed the hands of charity and beneficence. It is an error, therefore, which calls loudly for refutation.

In the most prosperous times there are always some trades and occupations that are depressed, in which there is a deficiency of employment, and, consequently, when the earnings of former days, laid up by the frugal and industrious, are consumed, and pinching distress is the result. There is almost always a superabundance in this city in some occupations, particularly clerks and shopkeepers. At some trades, employers take too many apprentices, and dismiss them as soon as their apprenticeships expire, when they frequently find it difficult to procure employment. General depression, moreover, occasionally takes place, in which there is a redundancy of hands at almost all occupations. These facts, which are of public notoriety, ought to silence the heartless, withering and deceptive cant, so often reiterated--that "nobody need be idle, who is willing to work."

That among the poor, there are dissipated, idle, and profligate persons, [are there not among the rich?] cannot be denied. But the proportion is small, much smaller than might be reasonably supposed, from the various disadvantages and discouragements under which that class labours. The worthless and profligate meet the public eye in our streets, on the wharves, and, occasionally, stretched in a state of intoxication on the pavements; and are brought before the mayor's court, where their profligacy is made conspicuous. The numbers are magnified tenfold by the imaginations of the spectators. Whereas the thousands and tens of thousands, who are industriously employed, early and late, to make a sorry subsistence, at a miserable pittance, pass wholly unnoticed. Who can think without sympathy for the sufferers, and regret for such a state of society, when he is informed of the appalling fact, that there are thousands of seamstresses in this city,

who, by the utmost industry and skill, cannot earn above a dollar, a dollar and a quarter, or a dollar and a half per week ! Competition has reduced the price of making soldiers', and slop shop shirts and pantaloons to twelve and a half cents each ! At this paltry price, whenever they are to be given out, the applications are too numerous to be supplied, and the work is sought after with as much avidity as if it afforded a liberal support : At certain seasons even this sort of work is very scarce, and numbers of poor women are wholly unemployed !

At the first establishment of the Provident Society, the applications for work so far exceeded the quantity to be given out, that the Society could not afford full employment to most of the applicants, who, of course, could not earn more than seventy-five cents or a dollar per week. And numbers went through snow and rain for eight and ten squares for it, and were thankful to receive it !!

A very expert, skillful woman, unburdened with a family, cannot make two shirts per day, unless she works from four or five in the morning, until eleven or twelve at night, which many of them do, to the great injury of their health ; with a family, which many of them have, the greatest number will be six, seven, eight or nine per week ! When we take into view, rent, occasional want of employment, sickness, and the support of children, we shall have some slight idea of the distresses of the numerous widows, who are devoted to this most miserable of employments. May I not ask, who, duly weighing these things, will have the hardness of heart, to involve in one general, sweeping denunciation, the distressed poor, as if their sufferings were the penalties of idleness and dissipation ?

Although I know how extremely difficult it is to eradicate inveterate prejudices, such as many of our citizens entertain on this subject, yet I fondly hope those prejudices will lose much of their weight and influence, when the following facts are calmly and dispassionately considered. Thousands of our labouring people travel hundreds of miles in quest of employment on canals, at 62 1-2, 75 and 87 1-2 cents per day, paying a dollar and a half or two dollars per week for their board, leaving families behind, depending on them for support. They labour frequently in marshy grounds, where they inhale pestiferous miasmata, which destroy their health, often irrecoverably. They return to their poor families, broken-hearted, and with ruined constitutions, with a sorry pittance, most laboriously earned, and take to their beds, sick, and unable to work. Hundreds are swept off annually, many of them leaving numerous and helpless families. Notwithstanding their wretched fate, their places are quickly supplied by others, although death stares them in the face. Hundreds are most laboriously employed on turnpikes, working from morning till night at from half a dollar, to three quarters per day, exposed to the broiling sun in summer, and all the inclemency of our severe winters. There is always a redundancy of wood pilers in our cities, whose wages are so low, that their utmost efforts do not enable them to earn more than from 35 to 50 cents per day. The painful situation of a watchman is an object of desire. There never was a want of scavengers ; and finally there is no employment whatever, how disagreeable, or loathsome, or dan-

gerous, or deleterious soever it may be, or however reduced the wages, that does not find persons willing to follow it, rather than beg or steal. With respect to females, we know, as I have stated, and shall dilate on more at length in the sequel, that there are thousands of them who eagerly seek after and gladly and thankfully accept employment, at which their utmost industry and skill cannot possibly enable them to earn more than from a dollar to a dollar and a half per week, making no allowance for sickness. Surely these facts are overwhelming, and ought to rescue the character of the labouring classes from the mass of obloquy by which they are too often unjustly aspersed.

“ Ah ! little think the gay licentious proud,
 “ Whom pleasure, power and affluence surround,
 “ They, who their thoughtless hours in giddy mirth,
 “ And wanton, often cruel riot, waste,
 “ How many eat the bitter bread
 “ Of misery. Sore pinched by wintry winds,
 “ How many shrink into the sordid hut,
 “ Of cheerless poverty.
 “ Thought fond man
 “ Of these and all the thousand nameless ills
 “ That one incessant struggle, render life
 “ One scene of toil, of suffering, and of fate,
 “ The conscious soul of Charity would warm,
 “ And her wide wish Benevolence dilate ;
 “ The social tear would rise, the social sigh.”

One word more. There are from 20 to 25,000 operatives and labourers in this city, of whom probably not more than 4 or 500 are dissipated---to which many of them are driven by distress and misery, and desperate circumstances. For while it is unhesitatingly admitted that dissipation produces poverty, it cannot be denied, that poverty and distress too often produce dissipation, and recklessness of character and consequences.

HAMILTON.



No. II.

In order to ascertain with something like precision the correctness of the idea I have long entertained, of the scarcity of female employment, and the deleterious consequences, as to the happiness and the morals of society, of the paltry rate of female wages, I addressed the following letter to the Secretary of the Female Hospitable Society, who has had the best opportunities of forming correct opinions on the subject.

Mrs. MARGARET SILVER,

MADAM,—Does or does not a large portion of the distress among the poor arise from the low rate of female wages?

2. What do you believe the highest wages a seamstress can earn, who works at home on government work, or for tailors?

3. What is about the average?

4. Is the Female Hospitable Society able to furnish employment to all who require it?

6. If not, what proportion of those who request work, receive it?

Yours, very respectfully,

MATHEW CAREY.

Philadelphia, Nov. 7, 1828.

(REPLY.)

RESPECTED SIR,

“ In answer to your first question, the Managers of the Female Hospitable Society, state, that, in their opinion, a very large proportion of the distress amongst the industrious poor does originate in the low prices of women’s wages, and the uncertainty of constant employment.

“ Second Question. The managers believe and know the most wages that can be earned by the closest application to work, either from government, societies, or tailors, *will not average more than from one dollar to one dollar and a quarter per week.*

“ Third. This Society has never been able to give work to one fourth of those who apply, even in the most flourishing state of its funds. Now, *not more than one in ten receives any.* This Society has 108 subscribers, at two dollars per annum, who paid last year. Some pains have been taken to ascertain that two-thirds of these belong, some to three, some to four, and all to two other charitable institutions. We also had 204 dollars from a sermon, bread money, and other donations.

“ We hope Mr. Carey will not deem it foreign to the subject, to observe further, that the moral poor, either men or women, when out of work, especially if they have families, become cast down, out of heart, and discouraged. *They are reluctant to be a public charge, and thus suffer the most severe privations rather than disclose their distress, or do violence to the best feelings of their nature by open complaint.* To persons of this description these private charitable societies are a source of support and comfort, and really mediums of moral good.

“ We most earnestly hope Mr. C. will combat the erroneous idea which obtains so much at present, that these charities increase pauperism; on the contrary, we do assure you, sir, we feel clear in stating, that in the twenty years we have been active in this society, we can prove *we have been instrumental by timely aid,* (or, to use their own phrase, ‘a little help at a pinch,’) in keeping hundreds out of the Alms-House, thereby preserving that principle of honest industry, which is the mutual bond of civil society, and the everlasting barrier between virtue and vice.”

“ We remain, Sir, respectfully,

“ MARY A. SNYDER, Governess F. H. Society.

“ MARGARET SILVER, Secretary.

Mr. M. Carey.

This letter demands the most serious consideration of the public, as it fully establishes the magnitude of the error which prevails, with respect to benevolent institutions, which error, I repeat, operates most perniciously on the poor; and I trust it will call forth the effective support of the wealthy and humane for institutions which have so direct an effect to prevent demoralization, and mitigate human suffering, many of which institutions are in a languishing state for want of that support.

I also wrote to Dr. M. Anderson, who is in extensive practice in Southwark, from whose reply I annex an extract:—

“ To your query, “ Does or does not a large portion of the distress of the lower order of the working class arise from the low rate of female wages?” I state that the answer from all parts of our city and districts, must be in the affirmative. It is very clear, that when women were paid 25 cents for making a shirt, and so in proportion for every other article of their work, they could purchase more and live better than they now can, when, as I am told, they receive only 12 1-2 cents for a shirt, and so in proportion for every other article.”

It may not be amiss to cast a glance at the mode in which these societies generally start into existence. A few persons of public spirit discover a want of an institution for some particular object, and exert themselves to procure the co-operation of others of similar views. A constitution is formed—efforts are made to procure subscribers—and as there is generally a considerable degree of zeal in the commencement of all undertakings, and as there are many persons in the city who never refuse their subscription to any charitable object, 100, 200, or 300 subscribers are procured, and the society goes into operation. It is uncommon to make efforts afterwards, when the original zeal abates; and very few subscribers offer voluntarily, unless for objects

of paramount claims. Even if new efforts are made, they are generally attended with little success. Every year, death, removals, or resignations, thin the numbers; and I feel persuaded, that at the present hour, the number of subscribers to all the charitable institutions in the city is not one quarter of what it was at their commencement.

The Female Hospitable Society consisted originally of 700 subscribers. In 1827, there were only about 107. The Provident Society in 1823, consisted of 1015 subscribers. In 1827, there were but about 600 subscriptions received, *including arrearages*—only 320 paid last year! The withdrawals from other Societies are much in the same proportion.

Their chief support arises from interest on stocks purchased by donations and bequests of liberal minded citizens. Without this resource, the most of them would sink into insignificance. Thus, of 452 dollars received by the Northern Dispensary in 1827, \$270 dollars, or sixty per cent. arose from the bequest of one individual, James Wills.



I. *Societies for Reformation.*

There are about 300 subscribers to the House of Refuge. The subscription is two dollars per annum. The total receipts last year were \$11,993—of which \$4,427 were private contributions, including \$506 from annual subscribers, \$2000 from the state treasury, \$5,000 from the county—and materials sold \$66. The society borrowed \$12,000 last year to complete the building.

The Magdalen Society has about 70 annual, and 4 life subscribers. The subscription is two dollars per annum. The total amount of receipts for last year, was \$1160, of which \$160 were for subscriptions; \$158 for work done in the house; and \$839 for interest, dividends, ground rent, &c.

The subscription to the society for discouraging the use of ardent spirits, is only one dollar. The number who have paid last year was seventy-four, \$74!!!



II. *Societies for the Relief of Physical Wants.*

Among the charities that stand pre-eminent, are the dispensaries for relief of the sick poor. In a wealthy city with a population of probably 130,000 people, embracing a large portion of the poorer classes of society, it might be reasonably supposed, that there would be at least a thousand annual contributors to these institutions; and that the annual contributions would be 3, 4, or 5000 dollars. Such a calculation, however plausible, is miserably falsified by the actual state of things. The whole number of paying subscribers to the three dispensaries is only about *two hundred and thirty two!* Were it not for the interest on donations and bequests, their utility would be reduced with-

in very narrow limits, particularly that of the northern and the southern.

There are 109 subscribers to the Philadelphia Dispensary, of whom ten are for life. The annual subscription is five dollars. The amount received from annual subscribers, last year, was \$455. The total receipts were \$3457, of which \$1332 were a bequest of John Grandom ; \$267, a bequest of Charles Brown ; and \$1858, for interest, dividends, rents, &c. There were 3623 patients under the care of the dispensary last year, of whom 3450 recovered, 68 died, the remainder were discharged, removed, &c.

The number of annual subscribers to the Northern Dispensary is 89 ; the subscription is three dollars per annum. The annual subscriptions last year, amounted to \$364. The total receipts were \$3141, of which \$1950 were a bequest of John Grandom ; income of Willis's legacy, \$265 ; Daniel Sutter's legacy of \$97 ; contributions, \$364 ; the residue, principal, and interest, \$556. The total number of patients, under the care of the institution, last year, was 1150, of whom 1100 recovered ; 27 died ; relieved, irregular and remaining, 23.

There appear to be but 34 subscribers to the Southern Dispensary! The annual subscription is three dollars. The amount received from annual subscriptions last year, was \$102! The total receipts were \$2548, of which the bequests of John Grandom and James Willis, formed about three-fourths ; the former \$1640, the latter \$265.— The number of patients under the care of the institution last year, was 1036, of whom 966 recovered ; 19 died ; remain, 33 ; the residue were restored, discharged, &c.

The directors of the Northern and Southern Dispensaries have not been wanting in the performance of the duty they owe those institutions, by repeated strong appeals to the beneficence and charity of their fellow citizens. They have answered no purpose.

The Female Episcopal Benevolent Society, has about 150 subscribers. The subscription is one dollar per annum, The total receipts of last year were \$202.

“ The Female Society of Philadelphia, for the Relief and Employment of the Poor,” consists of 128 members. There is no stated annual contribution ; it is optional with the members. The total receipts of last year were \$1576, of which \$255 were annual subscriptions ; \$71 for work done ; legacies of Martha Powell, Archibald Thompson, and Elizabeth H. Tyson, \$408 ; goods sold, \$448.

There are about 50 subscribers to “ The Philadelphia Society, for alleviating the miseries of public prisons.” The annual subscription is one dollar. The total receipts of the year 1828, were \$236, of which \$75 were from annual subscriptions ; the remainder from ground rent and dividends.

There are about 130 annual subscribers to “ The Indigent Widows' and Single Women's Society.” The subscription is five dollars per annum. The total receipts of the year 1828, were \$7659, of which \$665 were for annual, and \$240 for life subscriptions ; \$4875 from John Grandom's legacy ; \$237 from Mr. Chevers's ; and from Mar-

tha Powel's 390 dollars ; board of persons in the asylum \$213 ; from Maelzell's exhibition, \$124 ; donations, \$417 ; sundries, \$498. There are forty-four inmates in the house, most of whom have spent their early days in prosperity and affluence.

The managers of the society have just published a pathetic address, from which I annex the following extract :—

“ The Managers are called upon to lament the decrease in the annual subscriptions. This has been so great, from time to time, since the establishment of the institution, that the income arising from the little funded property in possession will not make up the deficiency thus occasioned ; and *unless new subscriptions can be obtained, or donations are received, the resources of the society will be totally inadequate to meet the expenses of the ensuing year.*— For several years, considerable assistance has been rendered by donations of vegetables, provisions, materials for clothing, &c. It is to be regretted that such valuable contributions have greatly declined, as the expenses of the establishment have proportionably increased in consequence of these supplies being withdrawn.”

“ The association for the care of coloured orphans” was instituted in 1822. There are 35 members, mostly of the society of friends, There are 99 annual subscribers. The subscriptions last year amounted to \$ 222. The total receipts were \$ 915, of which \$ 292 were a legacy of Martha Powell.

To the Orphan Society there are about 91 subscribers. The subscription is five dollars per annum.

The total receipts of last year were \$ 9466—of which \$ 456 were for annual subscriptions. Life subscriptions and donations \$240--John Grandom's legacy, \$4875 ; Martha Powell's, \$390 ; and Miss Egger's, \$500 ; dividends and ground rents, \$2133 ; for work executed by the children, \$157 ; sundries, \$120. The number of children in the asylum is 105.

“ The Pennsylvania Society for promoting the abolition of slavery, the relief of free negroes held in bondage, and for improving the condition of the African race” consists of about 140 members. The subscription is two dollars per annum. The total receipts last year were \$830 of which \$287 were from subscribers—the remainder, \$543, for ground rent and interest.

The Female Hospitable society has existed for above twenty years. The subscription is two dollars per annum. The total receipts of last year \$620—of which \$337 were for subscriptions—\$39 for interest—and \$244, the residue of B. R. Cheevers's legacy.

“ The Female Association of Philadelphia for the relief of women and children in reduced circumstances,” was organized in 1800—and is incorporated. Its object is entirely confined to persons who have seen better days, whom it benevolently preserves from sinking to that state of penury and distress whereby they become common paupers. seventy children are taught. The subscription three dollars. The annual subscriptions last year were \$240—the total receipts \$1042.

“ The Infants' clothing association” consists of about 20 ladies who meet at each other's houses alternately once a fortnight to make up clothing for destitute children. The subscription is two dollars a year. The receipts in money last year were \$89 ; in addition to which, the society received various donations of muslins, flannels, &c. &c. which enabled them to make up nearly 400 garments for distribution.

The Roman Catholic orphan society of St. Joseph, was instituted

in 1808, and has educated and apprenticed 100 children. There were originally 300 annual subscribers, of whom some few have commuted, and become life subscribers. Only seven paid last year. The total of the receipts was \$1064, of which \$893 were for ground rent and interest—\$46 from subscriptions; and a donation, \$125.

The ladies belonging to St. Joseph's Chapel have formed a society for providing clothing for the orphans. They pay three dollars' entrance and three dollars annually. The receipts of the last year were \$171.



No. III.

The Southern Dorcas Society distributed in the year 1827, 701 garments, principally to the aged, the sick and children, in want of covering, to shelter them from the inclemency of the weather. This society, which ought to consist of at least 500 members, has but sixty, although the annual contribution is only half a dollar. Its receipts in 1827, were about \$100, of which one half was received from the benevolent Robert Barclay,* of London, per Mrs. Chew and Dr. Parke. However, in addition to their cash receipts, several charitable ladies and gentlemen furnished them with articles of clothing.

"The Dorcas Society, of the District of Southwark," was organized in March, 1828, the object of which, is, "To afford relief to sick and indigent females and their children, so far as to prevent, if possible, actual suffering." There are 200 subscribers; the annual subscription is half a dollar. The total receipts of last year were \$120.

"The Female Association for the relief of the sick and infirm poor with clothing," &c., was instituted November, 1828. It is composed of 35 members, and has 61 annual subscribers. The contributions are optional. The cash receipts have been 80 dollars. There have been received in addition, considerable quantities of materials for making up clothing.—350 garments have been distributed.

A very small association of Female friends exists in this city, styled, "*The Fragment Society*," from having collected fragments of furniture and other articles, which were superfluous in their own dwellings, and those of their friends. In addition to those collections, they have purchased a number of stoves, some beds, and a quantity of bedding, &c.; which they loan to deserving persons, who are in reduced circumstances, but from a laudable spirit of independence and sensibility, the best guardians of virtue, shrink from the idea of descending to the level of paupers, and applying to the guardians of the poor.—The loans are made at the commencement of winter, and the articles are returned in the spring; and, with very few exceptions, in good order. Their funds are small; but their opportune aid rescues numbers of valuable individuals from distress and wretchedness.—

* This gentleman, a native of Philadelphia, but long settled in England, has, for years, contributed one hundred pounds sterling, annually, towards the charitable institutions of this city, most of which have partaken of his bounty.

In scarcely any other mode, could the wealthy better bestow some of their superfluous means, than on this society.

Few Societies were ever more liberally supported at the commencement, than the Provident Society. The collections of the first year were as follow :—

10 Patrons at \$100 each	-	-	\$1000
124 Life Subscriptions at \$20,	-	-	2480
1015 Annual Subscriptions,	-	-	2030
Donations, - - -	-	-	2029
			\$7539

This was on a scale worthy of such a city as Philadelphia; and, had this degree of support continued, and adequate prices been paid for the work, it would have produced a copious harvest of good. But the public patronage has greatly declined. The annual subscriptions for the second year, 1825, sunk to \$1018; for the year 1826, to \$698; for 1827, the receipts were \$1232, nearly one half arrearages; for 1828, the subscriptions and donations have amounted to only \$646.

How utterly inadequate this society is, under its present reduced support, to meet the wants of the ill-fated women, for whose benefit it was intended, is obvious from the mortifying fact, that, although there are one thousand applicants, there was paid for work the last year only \$2,253, being less than two dollars and a half to each individual.

I cannot resist the temptation to offer a few remarks on the operations of this society, to which I earnestly and respectfully invite the attention of the president and managers. That it originated in the purest motives of benevolence and beneficence, I cheerfully bear my testimony; and likewise that it has done and is doing good. But that the good has greatly diminished cannot be doubted, as appears from the preceding paragraph. It affords employment in the winter season, when work from the tailors slackens, and when the sufferings of the poor are at their height. This is beneficial. But I am constrained to say, there is a great drawback on it. The wages given are insufficient to support human nature, even allowing the employment to be constant—no sickness to interfere—no children to attend to—no casualty to take place. The *maximum* of the women's earnings is a quarter dollar a day, and not more than one in ten can earn more than a dollar or a dollar and a quarter per week! I have been told in justification, by a benevolent manager, that they make no complaint—that they are satisfied with the wages they receive! But does this prove that they can pay rent, and feed and clothe themselves for such wages? If the price of making shirts, were reduced to 10, to 8, or even to 6 cents each, the poor women would still receive them thankfully. Why? Because they have no other resource—the alternative is a total want of employment, or the paltry wages of perhaps 12 or 15 cents, or, at most, a quarter dollar per day! During the present season, the women have never received more than four shirts, and most of them not more than two per week!

I have understood that when the society was formed, it adopted the minimum wages of 12½ cents, given at the time by tailors. Some, I am

informed, (but cannot vouch for the fact,) paid more liberally. But as soon as the society fixed the prices, they were regarded as the general standard. If this be so, as I believe it to be, it was a most serious evil—almost enough to countervail all the advantages resulting from the society. The Female Hospitable Society pays, and has uniformly paid, of late years, 18 3-4 cents cash, for the same kind of shirts. The society ought to raise the wages to a similar price, so as to enable the women to earn a subsistence. If the society sets the laudable example, it will be followed by the tailors and others who give work to this interesting class, and be a jubilee to them and their children. There will be no generosity in the rise. It will be a mere act of humanity and justice. The present system is literally “grinding the faces of the poor.” If, as I have been told, the funds will be exhausted by this measure, it is better so than half starve the poor people who work for the society. A proper appeal to the public would, undoubtedly, procure such additional sums from year to year, at the approach of winter, as would enable it to continue its operations.

These observations apply with equal force to all societies here and elsewhere, whose object is to give employment to the poor. They ought to give full wages, lest, by reducing rates, they produce a permanent and general evil, while they at best do but a partial and temporary good.

There are 16 annual subscribers to the Colonization Society. The subscription is two dollars a year. There are 34 life subscribers at ten dollars each. Seven of the life subscribers have made donations of \$40 each. The total receipts of last year were \$482.



Societies for the Promotion of Education.

“The Infant School Society of the city of Philadelphia” was established in May 1827. It is under a board of twenty five managers, of whom Mrs. Perit is President, Miss Sparhawk Secretary, and Miss Yarnall Treasurer. There is a board of advisers composed of nine citizens. The annual subscription is two dollars. The number of subscribers 320. The amount of annual subscriptions last year was above \$600. Life subscriptions \$800, which indicates the number of life subscribers to be 40. Donations, \$928. Liberal as are these contributions they are inadequate to the support of the number of schools that would be requisite for the purpose of carrying into full effect the benevolent objects in view. The life subscriptions are invested as a permanent fund—and without an increase of subscriptions, the Society will have to depend on an income of about 700 dollars a year. There are three Schools in active operation, and a fourth is in a state of preparation. An act was passed at the last session of the Legislature, authorizing the Directors of the public schools to incorporate the infant schools in their system of education; and a memorial, praying them to adopt this salutary measure, has been presented to the board by a meeting of citizens—with which it is hoped they will speedily comply.

The Infant School Society of Southwark, consists of 166 annual subscribers. The receipts of last year were \$460, of which \$166 were from annual subscribers, and the remaining \$294 donations

and life subscriptions. There are enrolled on the books 246 children, of whom about 170 attend daily. Numerous applications for admission have been rejected, for want of room. Want of funds alone has prevented the opening of another school.

The Infant School Society, of the Northern Liberties and Kensington, has established four schools. It was organized in May, 1828, and between that time and January 5, 1829, there were raised by subscriptions and donations, \$770; and received for tuition, \$119.—The subscription is one dollar per annum; there are 450 subscribers.

It may be confidently asserted that there is no object, in the wide range taken by beneficence in this city, in which so much substantial, permanent good can be done to society, in proportion to the expenditure, as by these infant schools. They call loudly for the support of the opulent.

The Apprentices' Library has 165 annual, and 37 life subscribers. The subscription is two dollars per annum. The receipts from March, 1828, till the present time, have been, \$681, of which \$330 were for annual subscriptions; the remainder life subscriptions, donations, &c.

"The Society for the free instruction of female children," consists of eighteen ladies, of the society of friends, who have a school called, "Aimwell," and employ two teachers for the instruction of about 70 children. Their income last year was \$742.

The Philadelphia Society for the establishment and support of Charity Schools, received in 1827, from 85 subscribers \$196. The total income of the year was \$2656. This institution is in a most flourishing condition, and reflects the highest honour on the city of Philadelphia, and on its liberal founders. It holds in real estate and capital stock \$37,110—\$15,415 of the former, and \$21,695 of the latter.—There are about 450 scholars, male and female, under its care.

"The Philadelphia Union Society for the education of poor female children," is incorporated, and has a school for the purpose. As its resources are by no means commensurate with its benevolence, it is obliged to limit its attentions to fifty scholars. The subscription is generally one dollar. The annual subscriptions are not sufficient to defray more than half of the expense. The remainder is borne by the interest on some legacies.

There are 156 annual subscribers. The total receipts of last year were 404 dollars—156 dollars for annual subscriptions, and 248 dollars for dividends on stock.

The Pennsylvania Institution for the Deaf and Dumb is supported chiefly by the state, which maintains thirty-nine of its pupils. The whole number there at present is 68, of whom three are supported by the state of New Jersey, two by Maryland, and there are, besides, 24, of whom 13 are paid for by their friends. The subscription is two dollars per annum. There are 143 subscribers who paid last year.—The receipts of the year amounted to \$19,127, of which the commonwealth paid \$7,459; private pupils, \$2,337; State of New Jersey, \$402; donations and life subscriptions, \$196; John S. Brown, of Chambersburg, \$300; John Grandom's legacy, \$5000; Daniel Suter's \$100; for manufactured goods, \$1905.

The Abolition Society formed a fund at an early day, for the education of coloured people, which was liberally supported until the directors of the public schools made arrangements for their education.— The school is still continued ; but there are only ten subscribers. The annual subscription is five dollars. The total receipts of 1827, were \$341, of which \$75 were from subscribers, and the remaining \$266, from rents, dividends, &c.

The Philadelphia Association of Friends, for the instruction of poor children, is supported by rents, dividends, and stocks. Its receipts last year, were \$900.

“ The Pennsylvania Society for the promotion of Public Schools,” consists of 77 members. Its receipts of last year were \$154. It has no permanent funds. It has distributed about 1000 circulars through the state, at a heavy expense of postage, to arouse our citizens to a sense of the importance of the subject of a general system of public education, and to efforts commensurate with that importance. It is to be greatly regretted, that the success has by no means corresponded with their exertions.

Although the Institution for the support of Public Lancasterian Schools does not, strictly speaking, fall within my plan, I think it may not be amiss to devote a few lines to its details. It was organized in 1816. There are at present 17 schools, 8 in the city, and 9 in the adjacent districts. About 30,000 children have been educated in them. The average number, at one time, is about 4000. The cost to the city and county averages about four dollars each per annum. The boys are received between the ages of 6 and 14; the girls between 5 and 13. The institution is governed by directors and controllers chosen annually by the City Councils and the corporate authorities in the districts, who serve without compensation.

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TABULAR VIEW.*
Societies for Reformation.

	No. of annual subscribers.	Subscription per annum.	Amount of ann. subscriptions for 1828.	Total receipts for 1828
House of Refuge, - -	253	\$2	\$546	\$4493†
Magdalen Society, - -	70	2	160	1160
Temperance Society, -	74	1	74	74
	\$397	\$5	\$780	\$5727

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Societies for Relief of Physical Wants.

CLASS I.

Philadelphia Dispensary. -	99	\$5	\$455	\$3457
Northern Dispensary, -	89	3	364	3141
Southern do. - -	34	3	102	2548
	222	\$11	\$921	\$9146

*I have taken great pains to render these tables correct, but believe there are some errors in them; none, however, very material, or affecting the general result.

† Exclusive of \$2500 from the state treasury, and \$5000 from the county.

CLASS II.

	No. of annual subscribers.	Subscription per annum.	Ann. subscriptions for 1828.	Total receipts for 1828
Indigent Widows' and Single Women's Society, - -	131	\$5	\$655	\$7659
Prison Society, - -	70	1	75	236
Society for the care of Coloured Orphans, - - -	99	2	222	915
Orphan Society, - - -	91	5	456	9466
Abolition Society, - -	140	2	287	830
St. Joseph's Orphan Society,	7	3	46	1064
Infants' Clothing Association,	20	2	40	99
Colonization Society, - -	16	2	32	482
Fragment Society, - - .	12	1	12	68
	586	\$23	\$1825	\$20819

CLASS III.

Southern Dorcas Society, -	60	\$0 50	\$ 30	\$100
Dorcas Society of Southwark	200	0 50	100	120
Female Hospitable Society,	107	2	214	620
Female Episcopal Society, -	150	1	150	202
Female Association of Philadelphia,	80	3	240	1042
Female Association for the sick and infirm Poor, &c. -	61	1	80	80
Female Society for relief and employment of the poor, -	128	2	255	1576
	786	\$10	\$1069	\$3740

Societies for the Promotion of Education.

City Infant School Society, -	320	\$2	\$600	\$2328
Southwark Infant School, -	166	1	166	460
Northern Liberty do. -	450	1	450	889
Apprentices' Library, -	165	2	330	681
Society for the support of Charity Schools, - - -	85	2	196	2656
Society for promotion of Public Schools, - - -	77	2	154	154
Society for instruction of Poor Children, - - -	00	0	000	900
Friends' Society for instruction of Female Children, - -	00	0	000	742
Philadelphia Union Society for the Education of Poor Children,	150	1	156	404
Institution for Deaf and Dumb,	143	2	286	11260*
	1562	\$13	\$2338	\$20474

GENERAL SYNOPSIS.

Societies for the relief of Physical Wants, - - -	1588	\$44	\$3815	\$33685
Societies for the promotion of Education, - - -	1576	13	2338	20474
Societies for Reformation, -	397	5	780	5727
	3561	\$62	\$6933	\$59886

* Exclusive of \$7459 from the State, and \$402 from New Jersey.

Thus it appears that the whole number of subscriptions to these thirty-five important institutions, is about 3500 per annum; and there is reason to believe that the number of subscribers does not exceed 16 or 1800—as there are several of our citizens who subscribe to 4, 5, 6, & 8 of them. It is therefore more than probable, that three-fourths, or, at any rate, two-thirds of the whole support are drawn from 650 or 700 persons, whose subscriptions will average from four to five each.—Several are subscribers to two; but a large number to only a single society.

One word more. A citizen who subscribed to every one of these societies would have to pay only about \$63 per annum; and there are probably 1000 persons in the city who could well afford to contribute to that amount for such objects—500 who might with propriety double or treble that sum.

No. IV.

One of the chief objects of these essays being to meet and repel the pernicious error, so very prevalent and so very baneful in its effects on the poor and distressed, that charitable associations for their relief encourage idleness and dissipation, by producing a reliance on their bounty, and thus, instead of being useful or necessary, are positively injurious to society, by creating the pauperism which they ultimately relieve, I have therefore repeatedly dwelt on this topic, as of vital importance, and shall continue to enforce it, at the risk of severe criticism; and I flatter myself that it is impossible for any enlightened person whose mind is open to conviction, to examine the preceding tables with due care and attention, without being satisfied that the prevailing opinion on this subject, is, I once more emphatically repeat, hollow and fallacious, and deleterious in its consequences to the poor, and withering and blighting to the best feelings of the rich. No man will be so absurd as to pretend for a moment, that societies for the promotion of education—for the relief of destitute widows and orphans—for furnishing employment to the poor, who would otherwise be kept in idleness—for alleviating the miseries of prisons—for the relief of Magdalens—for the support of the house of refuge, and the dispensaries—or for the suppression of intemperance—can tend in the remotest degree, to encourage idleness. This reduces the argument within a narrow compass; for when the sums received for these purposes are deducted from the total amount, the remainder will dwindle into a very small modicum. The whole amount received by all the thirty five societies taken into view here, last year was \$59,837, which may be arranged as follows :

	Annual sub. for 1828.	Total recls. for 1828.
Received for the promotion of Education,	2338	\$20474
Received for Reformation, - - -	780	5727
Received for the Dispensaries, - - -	921	9146
Received for Widows, Orphans, Prisoners, Abolition of Slavery, and Colonization, . . .	1069	3740
Remains for the relief of human misery, supplying food for the hungry, drink for the thirsty, and clothes for the naked, - - -	1825	20810
	\$6933	\$59897

Here then I make a stand, and on this ground rest the solemn appeal to the intelligence and humanity of this community, in defence of those benevolent institutions, which form delightful oases on which the mind's eye rests with delight, in the midst of the arid and barren deserts, which are, alas! too general all the world over, wherein man is so frequently rendered deaf, and blind, and dumb to the misery of his fellow creatures, and induced to hug his thousands and his millions to the last hour of his existence. Those who have been so long and so successfully, endeavouring to dry up the sources of human benevolence, no where very abundant, and which at best pour their scanty streams in very narrow rills, have indeed much to answer for. Should the facts and arguments herein adduced, have the effect, as I flatter myself will be the case with some readers, to remove the prejudices under which they have laboured, I fondly hope they will be as zealous and industrious in the propagation of salutary truth, as they have been in the propagation of injurious error. And may I not cherish the belief, that those wealthy and benevolent individuals, who have hitherto withheld their bounty, on ground now proved to be wholly untenable; that is, fear of producing ill, where they intended to do good; will henceforward adopt a system more congenial with their nature, and more in keeping with the stations they occupy in society—with the claims society has on them—and with the manifold blessings they enjoy.

I have included in the third class the receipts of the female society for the relief and employment of the poor, \$1576, which do not, strictly speaking, belong to it, as a large portion of its disbursements are for work done. This subtracted, would reduce the sum received last year, against which any cavil might be raised, to \$2164. But as a portion of its receipts are devoted to procuring food and raiment for the poor, I thought proper to add the whole sum.

Thus it appears that the whole amount of the annual subscriptions for those particular societies, which furnish food and clothing for the destitute, so obnoxious to some of our citizens, was last year only \$1069—that their whole receipts were only 3740 dollars; and that a person who subscribed to all of them, would have to pay only ten dollars per annum! From the general prejudice that exists on this subject, an observer might be tempted to believe that the tax levied in this way, was 20 or 30,000 dollars.

HAMILTON.



No. V.

“What mean ye, * * that ye grind the faces of the poor, saith the Lord God of Hosts?”—Isaiah iii. 15.

“He that oppresseth the poor to increase his riches, shall surely come to want.”—Prov. xxii. 16.

The case of the paltry, contemptible compensation for female labour, with its attendant suffering, wretchedness, and demoralization, presses so strongly on my mind, that I must resume it. Would to heaven I could do it justice—and that I had a portion of the eloquence of Curran or Burke, that I might enkindle such a spirit among the more favoured classes of the community, male and female, as would eradicate this “besetting sin” of the times, the disgrace and dishonour of our city; which places thousands of females in the appal-

ing situation depicted by the correspondent whose interesting letter I annex; that is, with no alternative but—"STARVATION OR DISHONOUR."—* What an odious state of society! I find on minute inquiries, that a skilful industrious seamstress, unencumbered by a family, cannot average more than about nine shirts, unless she works so early and late as to destroy her health, but I will assume about ten per week. Now let us examine the result of a year's close and painful labour, supposing sickness or want of employment to cut off only four weeks in the year—whereas I might with more propriety assume 8, 10, or twelve.

Forty-eight weeks at \$1 25 per week,	-	-	\$60 00
Room rent, sometimes 62½, but say 50 cents			
per week,	-	-	\$26
Fuel, say 25 cents per week,	-	-	13
			— 39
<hr/>			
Remains for food and raiment, for self and children, if			
any, the sorry miserable pittance per annum of			\$21 00

* *Extract of a letter from a respectable Citizen to the author of these Essays.*

"There is no subject that has more painfully occupied my mind, than *the very inadequate return, for I will not call it compensation, made to females who depend on their needles for support* * * * * I allude to persons who have been delicately brought up, but have had their prospects blasted, and who have not strength for any other employment than the needle. Is it not to be feared that the institution of some of our charitable foundations and the manner in which some really important objects are carried on, *have greatly aggravated the distresses of many deserving and respectable females?* Far be it from me to impeach the motives of any persons whatever. I believe the intentions of the persons referred to are pure and commendable. Indeed, I know enough of some of them to feel confident, that they must be actuated by a high sense of religious obligation, and a benevolent concern for the present and everlasting happiness of those whom they patronize. But may not even commendable ardour sometimes lead to error? In the intensity of our desire to accomplish an object confessedly important, may not the ultimate effect of measures apparently necessary and unexceptionable be entirely overlooked? Now such has been the fact. It is within my knowledge, that *females who once earned a sure, though, I would say, scanty subsistence, have, of late years, been reduced to a state nearly approaching absolute want,* although the ability and inclination to follow their accustomed employment had suffered no diminution. But they could not obtain employment at the same prices as before. The customers had only to send to one of our public institutions to have their linen, &c. made up at much lower prices—in fact, at prices, which *reduce females to the only alternative of starvation or dishonour!!!* To the conductors of our public charities I would say, *Let no consideration induce you to do any thing injurious to female industry.* It is vain for those who must pay for lodging, to compete with your inmates, supported as they are by the bounty of the public. *Better, far better, to do no work of such kinds, than to undersell and destroy virtuous females.* Without dictating improperly, I may be allowed to say, that those who see with my eyes, are bound in honour and conscience to employ females as before, and not to pay them the reduced, but the former prices for their work; also to employ females wherever they can be useful, and on no account to beat them down, because necessity may impel others to work at a low rate. I am earnest, very earnest on this point."

To heighten the horror and abomination of this state of things, let us take into view, the probable case of 8, 10, or 12 weeks' want of employment or sickness. Suppose, instead of four weeks, there are ten, it reduces the pitiful remnant for food and raiment for a year's labour to 15 dollars! We are in the habit of commiserating the poorer classes in England; but it cannot be doubted that the case of many of the women in question is full as lamentable, and that they are as completely ground down to the earth,

Again. Suppose, a case of no uncommon occurrence—a woman with two or three small children to attend, with occasional sickness, and hence only making a shirt a day: she earns but 75 cents per week; the precise amount of her rent and fuel—without a cent for provisions or clothing! and yet we have eloquent orators declaiming against benevolent societies! Alas! for human nature!

The poor creatures expend their miserable earnings for fuel, sustenance and clothing; and when their rent becomes due, they are often obliged to pawn their clothes, bedding and furniture to discharge their debt; or go round among benevolent citizens to beg what may satisfy their landlords, (a much heavier tax than the subscriptions to societies, and heavier than the poor tax on some citizens, who cannot resist the calls of distress,)—or else all that can be laid hold on is sold by a constable, and they are turned into the streets destitute. This is a case of frequent occurrence, the necessary result of the pitiful wages they receive; and from this lamentable fate no degree of prudence, sobriety, or industry can afford adequate security, while the present evil system continues.

If a curse be pronounced on those who "*grind the faces of the poor,*" ought not those to tremble who have brought to this deplorable state so many of that sex to which we owe so large a portion of our happiness—who have watched over our infancy—ministered to us in our sickness—added to, and participated in our enjoyments—and solaced us in our distresses! Do we not callously and wickedly almost force them to those dishonourable courses that make them a curse and pestilence to society, and destroy their health and happiness here, and perhaps their immortal souls hereafter?

No man of correct feeling, can read the preceding statement of the yearly earnings of this oppressed and interesting class, without shuddering with horror at the picture it holds to view, and using his endeavours, if he has an opportunity, to apply a remedy. The ladies of this city, celebrated, so justly celebrated, for their charity and benevolence, are earnestly conjured to exert themselves, to efface this stigma from the city.

I venture to propose a mode by which this evil may be brought before the community, and a reasonable chance be afforded of applying a remedy. Let a few ladies of high standing unite and ascertain from personal inspection what amount of wages can be earned by industrious women at sewing, washing, spooling, shoe binding, folding sheets, &c. &c. and then recommend such an increase of wages in all these branches, as will enable such women to earn at least two dollars, or two dollars and a quarter per week. No measure so completely based on justice and humanity, if properly patronised, ever failed of success. I could name a dozen ladies, illustrious for

their beneficence, who glide through life almost "*unseen, unknown,*" any one of whom would be proper to commence this laudable business, and would soon find aids in abundance. But I trust it is unnecessary to particularize—and that the plan only needs to be proposed, to be carried into operation.

The wages of female house servants, bear but a small proportion to those of males. They vary from 75 cents to a dollar and a half per week, with board and lodging—whereas those of men servants, who do not perform near so much labour, are from 8 to 12 dollars per month. However, the attire of male servants being much more costly than that of females, the disproportion, although too great, is not as striking as it appears at first glance.

The government employs about 400 seamstresses in this city to make shirts, pantaloons, &c. for the army. Their employment, as I understand from high authority, continues about eight months in the year—and expert seamstresses make from eight to ten articles per week, at 12½ cents each. I will suppose them to average 10—for which they receive the paltry sum of \$1 25 cents per week. The calculations already made apply to this case.

The government paid for this item in 1827, \$23,200.

I had fondly hoped that a proper application to the secretary of war, respecting the effect of thus "*grinding the faces of the poor,*" could not fail of producing such a rise as would enable this ill-fated, pitiable, and helpless class of society to earn \$2.25 a \$2.50 per week.—The result has not been as anticipated; yet the difference would have been only about 10 a \$15,000 per annum. What an immense mass of penury and wretchedness to be relieved, and of human happiness to be purchased, at so cheap a rate, by a country with a revenue of \$26,000,000 per annum, and which pays eight dollars a day to its representatives! Five days' salary of the Vice President, who is not employed by official duties more than about four or five months in the year, is more than one of the women working for the army can earn in a year.

The wages for spooling are, I understand, 15 to 20 cents per hundred hanks, and a woman cannot do more than from 6 to 700 in a week. Those who spin thread are, I believe, in as melancholy a situation—and cannot earn more than a dollar or a dollar and a quarter per week. I ask, emphatically, is not this "*grinding the faces of the poor?*"

May I take the liberty of suggesting to the clergymen of our city, that an occasional sermon on the condition of the poor females who depend on the labour of their hands for a support for themselves and their children, and a strong appeal to the justice and humanity of their auditors, on this very interesting topic, would be at least as useful as any other subject they could select? I do not mean actual charity sermons; of these there are enough, and the contributions are in general sufficiently liberal. I mean sermons on the inhumanity of cutting down the wages of female labour so as to hold out to a portion of this class—many of whom are highly estimable—the frightful alternative—which can never be too often repeated—STARVATION OR POLLUTION.

It gives me pleasure to be able to state, that there are certain classes of females, who are decently paid. Milliners and mantua makers, and tayloresses, who work in private families, receive from 50 to 62 1-2 cents per day and their board. They are in great demand, particularly at certain seasons of the year, and are accordingly treated with considerable attention, frequently sitting at table with their employers. Colourists earn from two to three dollars a week---women employed in factories about the same. Seamstresses who are hired in families, receive but a quarter dollar a day and their board; and are thus reduced to a level with the higher order of female servants. Is it not unjust and partial to the highest degree, that a seamstress who works in her own room, and boards and lodges herself, cannot by any possibility, earn more than a dollar and a quarter or a dollar and a half, while she who works in other people's houses, earns a dollar and a half and her board?

HAMILTON.



No. VI.

Pure religion and undefiled, * * * is this, to *visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction.*—JAMES i. 27.

“Thus spake the Lord of hosts, saying, Execute true judgment, and shew mercy and compassion every man to his brother.—ZECH. vii. 9.

To the following letter, from a lady of the highest respectability, who is unceasing in works of mércy, I solicit the most serious attention of the reader---and it is to be presumed that no man, unless he has a heart as hard as Herod or Shylock, but must feel agonized at the idea that such scenes should be found to exist in a land flowing with milk and honey, while thousands are wallowing in wealth. I am not at liberty to publish the name of either the writer or the lady who handed me the letter. But I am at liberty to refer any person who may be sceptical on the subject, to the Rev. Mr. Hughes, of St. Mary's Church, who, in the performance of his clerical duties, was an eye witness to the heart-rending scenes here detailed, and who drew a feeling picture of them in a charity sermon which he recently preached. I trust these shocking facts will impose an eternal silence on those who are in the habit of railing at, and disparaging benevolent societies, not only as useless, but as pernicious, on the untenable ground, as I have already so often stated, that they are productive of idleness and dissipation among the poor---an error that prevents the alleviation of masses of human misery, and too often, I repeat, steels the hearts of the wealthy to the sufferings of their fellow mortals.

DEAR MADAM,

Philadelphia, Dec. 4, 1828.

“The family you requested me to give you an account of, lives in Shippen near Eighth street. Their names are M'Giffie. When we found a them, they were destitute of every necessary of life. *One child lay dead in the cradle*—the other was in bed with its sick parent. *The mother was quite insensible to all the sorrows that surrounded her, and remained so for some days.* I ought not to have said *bed*—as it was nothing but a little straw. *The other child is since dead.* I believe that HUNGER MORE THAN DISEASE REDUCED THEM TO THE DREADFUL STATE THAT WE FOUND THEM IN.

“The wife has fully recovered her health, and the husband is able to work a little. She is near being confined with another heir of sorrow. *They are strangers in a strange land.*

“*In the same house are six families not much better off!* May God raise them up helpers in their time of need! I could mention many more, equally destitute.

Indeed the suburbs display many scenes of sickness, sorrow, and wretchedness.

“In the old dispensation, God has said, “the poor shall not cease out of the land;” and in the new, Christ has said, “the poor ye shall have always with you.”

“What does this imply? That we shall let these our poor fellow creatures perish, because we have many calls? or because we are so much better than they? Who made us to differ from the vilest? That gracious God who makes his sun to shine on the evil and the good—and his rain to descend on the just and the unjust. Let us follow his example, and as much as possible do good to all men.

“One thing I ought to say, is, that I believe that *this family is perfectly sober, as Miss L. and myself have often visited them, and never saw any thing like liquor about the house.*”

Let it not escape the observation of the reader, that in the house where these harrowing scenes of human misery took place, there were “*six families not much better off.*” That is to say---in the family whose case is thus feelingly described, sickness was produced, and death probably accelerated, by HUNGER! and so many other human beings in the same house, were “*not much better off.*” What a volume is embraced in this affecting line! When such is the case in a single house, how many hundreds in a similar or nearly similar state of suffering, may be presumed to be in the city and suburbs! What a loud and imperative call upon the aid of the wealthy!

The following letter sheds further light on this important topic, and affords additional proof that distress, to a very great extent, too often exists in our city, to which our benevolent societies alone can afford relief.

SIR,

Philadelphia, Dec. 8, 1823.

“I beg leave to make known the following facts which have recently fallen under my notice.

“In the course of the current year, J. B. arrived at this place from Ireland, where he had been doing good business, but by the badness of the times had failed, so that there was no prospect that he would be able to go on again. Thinking that in this asylum of the oppressed, he might be able with decency to support himself and that family, which, from want of money, he was obliged to leave behind, he embarked alone. When he came here he was much depressed, but commenced weaving with alacrity, and worked almost night and day. As soon as he had earned ten dollars, he deposited them in the hands of a merchant towards paying the passage of his wife and children. He was almost immediately taken with that fever, which, during the last autumn, proved so fatal to foreigners, and died in two weeks. Some persons came forward and had him decently buried.

“His wife and children have now arrived—and the residue of their passage money was raised by subscription. They are in the most destitute situation, *not having even a bed to lie on.*”

Mr. M. Carey.



The salutary effects of the relief afforded by benevolent societies, a point so often disputed by theorists, who have never known what it is to suffer, and have had no opportunities of seeing the sufferings of their fellow creatures, are fully proved by cases like the following, which are of frequent occurrence.

At a meeting of the N. Y. Society for the relief of poor widows with small children, a few days since, one of the ladies made the following interesting statement.

“In the year 1825 I met with a family who had been reduced from a respectable life to the greatest poverty and distress. It consisted of Mrs. C—, who was left a widow with four children, and an aged mother dependent upon her for sup-

port. I was introduced to them under circumstances which excited in my breast feelings of the deepest interest. Mrs. C. was extremely ill, as was also one of her children, and her poor old mother almost worn out with fatigue and anxiety of mind: in addition to which she had become nearly blind from too close application to her needle, and was utterly unable to supply their necessary wants. I think *I never witnessed a scene of greater distress, or one which presented more urgent claims upon the bounty of your Society.* The timely relief thus afforded, was doubtless a meao in the hand of Providence of saving them when they were ready to perish. Every winter since they have received a little assistance from the Society, and by persevering industry have been enabled to support themselves with credit and respectability. Last winter Mrs. C. and her eldest daughter were both well settled in marriage, and the aged mother lives with them alternately, and upon this society descends the blessings of the widow and the fatherless."

I think I may venture to assert, that there are widows in this city, and many of them, who derive a partial support from benevolent societies, who once were able to maintain as high a port as any of the ladies who now figure in the dress boxes of our theatres at the benefit of a favourite performer. The highest and most exalted being that ever trod the earth, has no security against the vicissitudes of fortune ---French nobles have taught music and dancing and languages for a living---kings have become schoolmasters---and emperors have pined and died in obscurity.

The old code of laws for the support of the poor of this city was a pregnant source of abuse and of extravagant expenditure. It was lately altered greatly for the better---and most, if not all the gross evils removed. But it is to be regretted, that it occurred here, as it often occurs in reforms, in pruning away abuses, one good feature at least of the old system was expunged---I mean the power of affording outdoor relief,* which can be done only temporarily in future, as soon as the new buildings, now about to be erected, are finished.† This, it is true, was frequently and grossly abused, formerly. But it is susceptible of such control and regulation under the present regime as to guard against its evils. The new constitution of the board of guardians affords sufficient security against abuse, if the power were restored, as is imperiously necessary. It by no means follows, because formerly worthless and dissolute persons were nourished in idleness at their homes by a lavish expenditure of the public money, that therefore meritorious persons, reduced to penury, are not to be relieved but in the alms-house. There are hundreds of persons who formerly stood high in society, who, by the vicissitudes of trade, confidence in unworthy friends, or some other cause, have been gradually reduced to the most severe distress and penury---whom honourable men would shudder at seeing inmates of an alms-house, and who, in fact, would

* Having been instrumental in procuring this alteration, and a zealous member of the Committee who prepared the report on which the new system has been founded, I take my full share of the censure that attaches to the oversight in question. We realized the story of Jack in the Tale of the Tub; in tearing away the fringes and frippery, we tore away some of the essential parts of the garment.

†The following is the clause of the late act on this subject, referred to in the text: "Provided, that after the necessary accommodations are prepared in the hospital, alms house, and other buildings, all relief granted to the outdoor poor, SHALL BE TEMPORARY, and consist *entirely of fuel, provisions, clothing, medicines and medical attendance.*"

rather die than go there---but who, nevertheless, have a claim for support upon that society to whose welfare they have formerly contributed. To this meritorious class, every avenue of public relief will soon be completely closed. An alteration of the law is called for, empowering the guardians of the poor to afford outdoor relief in all such interesting cases.

HAMILTON.

No. VII.

“I was in prison—and ye came unto me. Matt. xxv. 36.

In imitation of the godlike example of Mrs. Fry and her friends in London, there is a small, but excellent Society in this city, of female friends, who visit our penitentiary, for the purpose of exciting religious and repentant feelings among the prisoners. It has, I am informed, been attended with the happiest effects.

The Society of “*Les sœurs de la Charité*,” in France have been celebrated by various writers and travellers—and too high praise cannot be awarded them. They are abstracted from worldly concerns—and devoted wholly to the hallowed employment of ministering relief and comfort to the sick and distressed—watching over the pillow of the dying poor; providing for the widow and the fatherless; in a word, in the practice of every act of goodness of which human nature is capable, and which human misery can require. Whatever may be their merits, and transcendent they undoubtedly are, I feel confident that a large proportion of the members of the Female Benevolent Societies of Philadelphia, are entitled to equal praise. Though in the enjoyment themselves of ease and affluence, which too often harden the heart and render it callous to the calls of humanity, and many of them of the most delicate habits—many having families to attend—they spare time to ascend to garrets and descend to cellars in quest of distress, in the dreary mansions of the poor, “to visit the sick—to comfort the comfortless—to feed the hungry—and to clothe the naked,”—and they will doubtless be richly rewarded in that country “from whose bourne no traveller returns,” with the joyous welcome, of—“*Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat. I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink. I was a stranger, and ye took me in; naked, and ye clothed me. I was sick, and ye visited me. I was in prison, and ye came unto me.*”

I hope I shall be pardoned for introducing a short extract from a most eloquent address of Judge Story, delivered Sept. 13, 1828, which applies admirably in its leading features to the ladies in question, and all engaged in such occupation.

“To the honour, to the eternal honour of the sex, be it said, that in the path of duty no sacrifice is with them too high, or too dear. Nothing is with them impossible, but to shrink from what love, honour, innocence, religion, require. The voice of pleasure or of power may pass by unheeded; but the voice of affliction never. THE CHAMBER OF THE SICK, THE PILLOW OF THE DYING, THE VIGILS OF THE DEAD, the altars of religion, never missed the presence or the sympathies of woman. Timid though she be, and so delicate, that the winds of heaven may not too roughly visit her; on such occasions she loses all sense of danger, and assumes a preternatural courage, which knows not, and fears not consequences. Then she displays that undaunted spirit, which neither courts difficulties, nor evades them; that resignation, which utters neither murmur nor regret; and that patience in suffering, which seems victorious even over death itself.

Would to heaven, that some of our citizens who are "*clothed in purple and fine linen,*" and "*fare sumptuously every day*"—whose tables lay the four quarters of the globe under contribution—who drink Champagne at twenty dollars a dozen—Burgundy at seven dollars a gallon, and Madeira at four and five dollars—who give 5 or 600 dollars for a pair of horses—and 3, 4, or 500 dollars for a gig—and the ladies who do not scruple to pay 100 or 150 dollars for a cashmere shawl—20, 30, or 40 dollars for a Leghorn bonnet—150 or 200 dollars for a ring—10 or 15 dollars for a tortoise shell comb—would to heaven, I say, that some of them could be prevailed upon to accompany those "ministering angels" in human form,* the members of the female benevolent societies, to the abodes of wretchedness in the suburbs of our city, where every room contains a family, in many cases widows who have been reared with tenderness and lived in affluence, but now have to earn a support for themselves and children by their needle, at the maximum of twenty-five cents per day. Could they behold their sorry fare, and the scantiness of the supply of even that fare—they would for ever cease to complain of the oppressive nature of the contributions to these societies—they would never join in the unfounded clamour against them, grounded on the absurd idea, that by their charities they encourage idleness, and produce pauperism! I will not allow myself to believe that this is, with some, a mere plea to justify them for not affording any contributions whatever. Far from producing pauperism, they often, by timely interference, prevent it. Were the examination here suggested to take place, perhaps gentlemen would appropriate annually to these benevolent objects, the price of half a dozen or a dozen of Champagne, and ladies retrench somewhat in the price of a shawl or a bonnet, or not change them quite so often.

* I regret that I dare not go into an enumeration of the names of the ladies referred to in the text. It would form a radiant galaxy, and be but a just tribute to their merits, and an incentive to others to follow their bright example, I cannot, however, refrain from recording two names—one, of a lady, who, it is to be hoped, has been transferred from this transitory scene to the realms of bliss—the other is still living, whose whole time is devoted to deeds of charity. The former is Mrs. Sarah Ralston, a woman whose name is synonymous with goodness. The other is Mrs. Juliana Miller, a most indefatigable labourer in the cause of mercy and beneficence. Nov. 12.

Dec. 8. On re-consideration, I have changed my opinion, and determined to publish the names of more of the ladies who have taken the lead in works of benevolence and beneficence—of some who have "put off this mortal coil"—of others who still distinguish themselves in this glorious career. I have two reasons for this measure—the first, my favourite maxim, "to give honour where honour is due"—the second, to stimulate others to follow the bright example. With this plea, I throw myself on the indulgence of the living ladies, whose names are thus published without their consent or knowledge; and I am afraid with their disapprobation. The motive will plead my apology.

Among those who are now no more, are Mrs. Robert Smith, Mrs. B. Chew, Sen. Mrs. William Meredith, Mrs. Hannah Hodge, Mrs. Clement Stocker, Mrs. Thomas Wharton, Mrs. Stille.

Of those who are now actively employed in works of mercy, shall enumerate—Mrs. Sarah Barry, Mrs. George Potts, Miss Olivia Sproat, Mrs. Esther Ball, Mrs. B. Chew, Mrs. Thomas Latimer, Mrs. Julia Rush, Mrs. Hitty Markoe, Mrs. McClure, Mrs. Snyder, Mrs. Silver, Mrs. Vanpelt, Mrs. Mary Hodge, the misses Ralston, Miss Ingles, Miss Ann F. Wheeler, Mrs. Thomas Sergeant, Mrs. Susan Shober, Mrs. Alexander Henry, Miss Caroline Bayard, Mrs. D. Howell, Miss Anne Read, Mrs. Robert Parrish, Mrs. J. W. Perit, Mrs. York, Miss Davidson, Mrs. Joshua Lippencott, Miss Eliza Lawrence,

The wealthy, the grand object of whose existence appears to be to amass immense fortunes for their heirs, ought to ponder well on the eloquent words of a celebrated preacher of Boston, the Rev. Dr. Gardiner, whose congregation embraces a large number of the most opulent citizens of that city, millionaires and semi-millionaires,—“My dearly beloved brethren, let me solemnly assure you, that some of you might appropriate five, some ten, some fifteen, some twenty thousand dollars a year, for charitable and benevolent purposes, and still retain *enough to ruin your children!*” *Enough to ruin your children!* what an admonitory sentence! What a lesson! how just! how profound! How little regarded by parents in general! how fully borne out by the career of a large number of those who inherit independent fortunes, without the necessity of attending to business!



From a full view of the subject, and a careful examination of the lists of subscribers to the different benevolent institutions, I feel warranted in stating—

1. That they derive but a slender portion of their support from the wealthiest part of our citizens.

2. That their support is chiefly derived from the middle classes of society, and bears but a very small proportion to the wealth and population of the city, or to the claims of distress.*

3. That the idea that every person, able and willing to work, can procure employment, is radically wrong—as there are great numbers of persons of both sexes, particularly females, who eagerly seek work, and cannot find employment.

4. That the charge so frequently alleged against the poor, that their distress and wretchedness arises from their idleness and worthlessness, however true as to a small proportion of them, is utterly destitute of foundation as regards the majority.

5. That it is impossible for a woman dependent on her needle, and employed on coarse work; and also for a spooler when encumbered

Miss Hannah Parke, Miss Sarah Wistar, Miss Mary Redman, Miss Juliana Randolph, Mrs. Moves, Miss Lapsley, Miss White, Mrs. A. Cook, Mrs. Cornelia Cooper, Mrs. Rebecca Wilmer, Mrs. S. Page, Mrs. M. L. Moore, Mrs. Sarah Cunningham, Mrs. Frances Standridge, Mrs. Anne Halberstadt, Mrs. Carswell.

I should be sorry to have it supposed for a moment, that this list, numerous as it is, contains one half of those so meritoriously employed. I have gone as far as my knowledge or memory enabled me. I am well aware that in this case I subject myself to a double censure—for publishing any names at all—and for omitting some equally meritorious with any of those in the list. I submit. No man ever did much good, who would not dare to meet censure in a righteous cause.

* There is one class of our citizens, who are heavily taxed for the relief of the poor, beyond their numerical proportion. I mean physicians. Independently of their contributions to charitable institutions; which are as liberal as those of any other class, the value of the gratuitous services they render, is probably *equal in amount to the contributions of all the rest of our citizens.* They attend the dispensaries, the alms house, and the hospital, gratis—and never, I believe, refuse, when called on, to attend the poor, who have no means of payment, and from whom they would not receive it. There are physicians in this city, whose contributions in this way, amount to 1000 a 1500 dollars per annum. This is not all. Moved by the distress of their poorer patients, they frequently supply them with money to purchase food and medicines.

with children, or even without, to support human nature by the miserable wages they receive—and in many cases the wages of males are reduced so low as to render it impossible for a man with a family to lay by any provision for times of sickness, or want of employment.

6. That it is a great error to suppose our charitable societies encourage idleness and profligacy; for they produce a contrary effect in almost every case, by preventing the depression and ruin, and consequent degradation, of the poor.

7. That if each of our wealthy individuals subscribed to all of them, it would be but a very slender sacrifice for the public good, and bear a small proportion to the claims of society on him.

8. That the low rate of female wages, not more than one-third of what is earned by men for similar work, is discreditably to human nature—pernicious to the best interests of society—a fertile source of misery, immorality and profligacy†—and loudly calls for a remedy.

9. That the Provident, and all other societies which give employment to the poor, ought to pay adequate wages, so as to set a proper example to individuals---and, so far as regards shirts and pantaloons, that the price ought to be raised at once to eighteen cents.

10. That, unless they adopt this plan, or one similar, they inflict nearly as much injury as they confer benefit.

11. That a reformation of the horrible oppression under which the seamstresses, spinners, spoolers, &c. groan, cannot be hoped for, unless ladies will come forward with decision, and use their influence to rescue their sex from the prostrate situation in which those unfortunate women are placed.

12. That it would be misplaced delicacy or timidity which should induce them to hesitate in the performance of so paramount an act of justice.

December 26, 1828.

HAMILTON.

† This may require explanation. Low female wages discourage prudent young men of the labouring class from marriage. This leads to a life of celibacy and licentiousness, and they frequently seduce the young women whom otherwise they would have taken as wives, who in their turn become seducers. Moreover, the trial is almost too severe for human nature, when on the one side there appears nothing but a wretched pittance, scarcely adequate to a miserable subsistence, with hardly a ray of hope of a change for the better during life; and when, on the other, temptation often steps forth in its most seductive form, proffering ease, fine dress, and affluence—an alternative too often presented to young females, to their utter ruin here and hereafter. Many of these unfortunates may, it is to be presumed, truly say with the Apothecary, "*My poverty, but not my will, consents.*"

PAMPH

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